

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

For each combination of color material signals corresponding to an input image signal, a total color material use amount is calculated. On the other hand, on  
5 the basis of a predetermined target color, total color material use amounts are set which vary smoothly in accordance with a variation in the target color. Then, one of all the combinations of color material signals  
10 determined as described above is selected and determined which corresponds to one of the set total color material use amounts which is the same as the total color material use amount corresponding to the input image signal. This combination is outputted to a printer as the optimum  
15 combination of color material signals corresponding to the input image signal.